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"RECOLLECTIONS AND OPINIONS OF AN OLD PIONEER."

By PETER H. BURNETT.

"The Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer," by Peter H. Burnett, has become a very scarce book. It contains what is probably the most valuable single account of some six years of the pioneer epoch of Oregon. It was written by a painstaking, fair and able observer, who had a prominent and creditable part in the history he narrates. He had the great advantage of a journal and other notes which were faithful, contemporary records. Upon these he based his "Recollections." Mr. Burnett's great activity as a correspondent, and his concern to be just and true, naturally resulted in his material, even, partaking of the definite, clear and complete character of history. THE QUARTERLY will reprint Chapters III, IV, V, and VI, which cover the portion of the book pertaining directly to Oregon.—Editor.

CHAPTER III.

DETERMINING TO GO TO OREGON—ARRIVE AT THE RENDEZVOUS— REMARKS ON THE NATURE OF THE TRIP.

In the fall of 1842 I moved to Weston, in Platte County, having purchased an interest in the place. During the winter of 1842-43 the Congressional report of Senator Appleton in reference to Oregon fell into my hands, and was read by me with great care. This able report contained a very accurate description of that country. At the same time there was a bill pending in Congress, introduced in the Senate by Doctor Linn, one of the Senators from Missouri, which proposed to donate to each immigrant six hundred and forty acres of land for himself, and one hundred and sixty acres for each child. I had a wife and six children, and would, therefore, be entitled to sixteen hundred acres. There was a fair prospect of the ultimate passage of the bill.

I saw that a great American community would grow up, in the space of a few years, upon the shores of the distant Pacific; and I felt an ardent desire to aid in this most important enterprise.

At that time the country was claimed by both Great Britain and the United States; so that the most ready and peaceable way to settle the conflicting and doubtful claims of the two governments was to fill the country with American citizens. If we could only show by practical test, that American emigrants could safely make their way across the continent to Oregon with their wagons, teams, cattle, and families, then the solution of the question of title to the country was discovered. Of course, Great Britain would not covet a colony settled by American citizens.

The health of Mrs. Burnett had been delicate for some three years, and it was all we could do to keep her alive through the winter in that cold climate. Her physicians said the trip would either kill or cure her. I was also largely indebted to my old partners in the mercantile business. I had sold all my property, had lived in a plain style, had worked hard, and paid all I could spare each year; and still the amount of my indebtedness seemed to be reduced very little.

Putting all these considerations together, I determined, with the consent of my old partners, to move to Oregon. I therefore laid all my plans and calculations before them. I said that, if Doctor Linn's bill should pass, the land would ultimately enable me to pay up. There was at least a chance. In staying where I was, I saw no reasonable probability of ever being able to pay my debts. I did a good practice, and was able to pay about a thousand dollars a year; but, with the accumulation of interest, it would require many years' payments, at this rate to square the account. I was determined not to go without the free consent and advice of my creditors. They all most willingly gave their consent, and said to me, "Take what may be necessary for the trip, leave us what you can spare, and pay us the balance when you can do so."

I followed their advice, and set to work most vigorously to organize a wagon company. I visited the surrounding counties, making speeches wherever I could find a sufficient audience, and succeeded even beyond my expectations. Having completed my arrangements, I left my house in Weston on the 8th day of May, 1843, with two ox wagons, and one small two-horse wagon, four yoke of oxen, two mules, and a fair supply of provisions; and arrived at the rendezvous, some twelve miles west of Independence, and just beyond the line of the State, on the 17th of May.

A trip to Oregon with ox teams was at that time a new experiment, and was exceedingly severe upon the temper and endurance of people. It was one of the most conclusive tests of character, and the very best school in which to study human nature. Before the trip terminated, people acted upon their genuine principles, and threw off all disguises. It was not that the trip was beset with

very great perils, for we had no war with the Indians, and no stock stolen by them. But there were ten thousand little vexations continually recurring, which could not be foreseen before they occurred, nor fully remembered when past, but were keenly felt while passing. At one time an ox would be missing, at another time a mule, and then a struggle for the best encampment, and for a supply of wood and water; and, in these struggles, the worst traits of human nature were displayed, and there was no remedy but patient endurance. At the beginning of the journey there were several fisticuff fights in camp; but the emigrants soon abandoned that practice, and thereafter confined themselves to abuse in words only. The man with a black eye and battered face could not well hunt up his cattle or drive his team.

But the subject of the greatest and most painful anxiety to us was the suffering of our poor animals. We could see our faithful oxen dying inch by inch, every day becoming weaker, and some of them giving out, and left in the wilderness to fall a prey to the wolves. In one or two instances they fell dead under the yoke before they would yield. We found, upon a conclusive trial, that the ox was the noblest of draft animals upon that trip, and possessed more genuine hardihood and pluck than either mules or horses. When an ox is once broken down, there is no hope of saving him. It requires immense hardships, however, to bring him to that point. He not only gathers his food more rapidly than the horse or mule, but he will climb rocky hills, cross muddy streams, and plunge into swamps and thickets for pasture. He will seek his food in places where other animals will not go. On such a trip as ours one becomes greatly attached to his oxen, for upon them his safety depends.

Our emigrants were placed in a new and trying position, and it was interesting to see the influence of pride and old habits over men. They were often racing with their teams in the early portion of the journey, though they had before them some seventeen hundred miles of travel. No act could have been more inconsiderate than for men, under such circumstances, to injure their teams simply to gratify their ambition. Yet the proper rule in such a case was to allow any and every one to pass you who desired so to do. Our emigrants, on the first portion of the trip, were about as wasteful of their provisions as if they had been at home. When portions of bread were left over, they were thrown away; and, when any one came to their tents, he was invited to eat. I remember well that, for a long time, the five young men I had with me refused to eat any part of the bacon rind, which accordingly fell to my share, in addition to an equal division of the bacon. Finally they asked for and obtained their portion of the bacon rind, their

delicate appetites having become ravenous on the trip. Those who were in the habit of inviting every one to eat who stood around at meal times, ultimately found out that they were feeding a set of loafers, and gave up the practice.

START FROM THE RENDEZVOUS—KILL OUR FIRST BUFFALO—KILL OUR FIRST ANTELOPE—DESCRIPTION OF THE ANTELOPE.

I kept a concise journal of the trip as far as Walla Walla, and have it now before me. On the 18th of May the emigrants at the rendezvous held a meeting and appointed a committee to see Doctor Whitman. The meeting also appointed a committee of seven to inspect wagons, and one of five to draw up rules and regulations for the journey. At this meeting I made the emigrants a speech, an exaggerated report of which was made in 1875, by ex-Senator J. W. Nesmith of Oregon, in his address to the pioneers of that State. The meeting adjourned to meet at the Big Springs on Saturday, the 20th of May.

On the 20th I attended the meeting at the Big Springs, where I met Colonel John Thornton, Colonel Bartleson, Mr. Rickman, and Doctor Whitman. At this meeting rules and regulations were adopted. Mr. Delaney, who was from high up on Big Pigeon, near Kit Bullard's mill, Tennessee, proposed that we should adopt either the criminal laws of Tennessee or those of Missouri for our government on the route. William Martin and Daniel Matheny were appointed a committee to engage Captain John Gant as our pilot as far as Fort Hall. He was accordingly employed; and it was agreed in camp that we all should start on Monday morning, May 22. We had delayed our departure, because we thought the grass too short to support our stock. The spring of 1843 was very late, and the ice in the Missouri River at Weston only broke up on the 11th of April.

On the 22d of May, 1843, a general start was made from the rendezvous, and we reached Elm Grove, about fifteen miles distant, about 3 P. M. This grove had but two trees, both elms, and a few dogwood bushes, which we used for fuel. The small elm was most beautiful in the wild and lonely prairie; and the large one had all its branches trimmed off for firewood. The weather being clear, and the road as good as possible, the day's journey was most delightful. The white-sheeted wagons and the fine teams, moving in the wilderness of green prairie, made the most lovely appearance. The place where we encamped was very beautiful; and no scene appeared to our enthusiastic vision more exquisite than the sight of so many wagons, tents, fires, cattle, and people, as were here collected. At night the sound of joyous music was heard in the tents. Our long

journey thus began in sunshine and song, in anecdote and laughter; but these all vanished before we reached its termination.

On the 24th we reached the Wakarusa River, where we let our wagons down the steep bank by ropes. On the 26th we reached the Kansas River, and we finished crossing it on the 31st. At this crossing we met Fathers De Smet and De Vos, missionaries to the Flathead Indians. On the 1st of June we organized our company, by electing Peter H. Burnett as Captain, J. W. Nesmith as Orderly Sergeant, and nine Councilmen. On the 6th we met a war party of Kansas and Osage Indians, numbering about ninety warriors. They were all mounted on horses, had their faces painted red, and had with them one Pawnee scalp, with the ears to it, and with the wampum in them. One of them, who spoke English well, said they had fasted three days, and were very hungry. Our guide, Captain Gant, advised us to furnish them with provisions; otherwise, they would steal some of our cattle. We deemed this not only good advice but good humanity, and furnished these starving warriors with enough provisions to satisfy their hunger. They had only killed one Pawnee, but had divided the scalp, making several pieces, some with the ears on and part of the cheek. Two of this party were wounded, one in the shoulder and the other in some other part of the body.

None of us knew anything about a trip across the plains, except our pilot, John Gant, who had made several trips with small parties of hired and therefore disciplined men, who knew how to obey orders. But my company was composed of very different materials; and our pilot had no knowledge that qualified him to give me sound advice. I adopted rules and endeavored to enforce them, but found much practical difficulty and opposition; all of which I at first attributed to the fact that our emigrants were green at the beginning, but comforted myself with the belief that they would improve in due time; but my observation soon satisfied me that matters would grow worse. It became very doubtful whether so large a body of emigrants could be practically kept together on such a journey. These considerations induced me to resign on the 8th of June, and William Martin was elected as my successor.

On the 12th of June we were greatly surprised and delighted to hear that Captain Gant had killed a buffalo. The animal was seen at the distance of a mile from the hunter, who ran upon him with his horse and shot him with a large pistol, several shots being required to kill him. We were all anxious to taste buffalo meat, never having eaten any before; but we found it exceedingly poor and tough. The buffalo was an old bull, left by the herd because he was unable to follow.

On the 15th of June one of our party killed an antelope. This is perhaps the fleetest animal in the world except the gazelle and

possesses the quickest sight excepting the gazelle and the giraffe. The antelope has a large, black eye, like those of the gazelle and giraffe, but has no acute sense of smell. For this reason this animal is always found on the prairie, or in very open timber, and will never go into a thicket. He depends on his superior sight to discern an enemy, and upon his fleetness to escape him. I have heard it said that when wolves are much pressed with hunger, they hunt the antelope in packs, the wolves placing themselves in different positions. Antelopes, like most wild game, have their limits, within which they range for food and water; and, when chased by the wolves, the antelope will run in something like a circle, confining himself to his accustomed haunts. When the chase commences, the antelope flies off so rapidly that he leaves his pursuers far behind; but the tough and hungry wolf, with his keen scent, follows on his track; and, by the time the antelope has become cool and a little stiff, the wolf is upon him, and he flies from his enemy a second time. This race continues, fresh wolves coming into the chase to relieve those that are tired, until at last the poor antelope, with all his quickness of sight and fleetness of foot, is run down and captured. As soon as he is killed, the wolf that has captured him sets up a loud howl to summon his companions in the chase to the banquet. When all have arrived, they set to eating the carcass, each wolf taking what he can get, there being no fighting, but only some snarling, among the wolves. This statement I do not know to be true of my own knowledge, but think it quite probable. It seems to be characteristic of the dog family, in a wild state, to hunt together and devour the common prey in partnership. Bruce, in his account of his travels in Abyssinia, relates that he saw five or six hyenas all engaged in devouring one carcass; and that he killed four of them at one shot with a blunderbuss, loaded with a large charge of powder and forty bullets.

When the antelope once sees the hunter, it is impossible to stalk the animal. On the trip to Oregon I tried the experiment without success. When I saw the antelope, upon the top of a small hill or mound, looking at me, I would turn and walk away in the opposite direction, until I was out of sight of the animal; then I would make a turn at right angles until I found some object between me and the antelope, behind which I could approach unseen within rifle-shot; but invariably the wily creature would be found on the top of some higher elevation, looking at me creeping up behind the object that I had supposed concealed me from my coveted prey. The only practical way of deceiving an antelope is to fall flat upon the ground among the grass, and hold up on your ramrod a hat or handkerchief, while you keep yourself concealed from his view. Though exceedingly wary, the curiosity of the animal is so great

that he will often slowly and cautiously approach within rifle-shot.

On the 16th of June we saw a splendid race between some of our dogs and an antelope, which ran all the way down the long line of wagons, and about a hundred and fifty yards distant from them. Greyhounds were let loose, but could not catch it. It ran very smoothly, making no long bounds like the deer or horse, but seemed to glide through the air. The gait of the antelope is so peculiar that, if one was running at the top of his speed over a perfectly smooth surface, his body would always be substantially the same distance from the earth.

Lindsey Applegate gave this amusing and somewhat exaggerated account of a race between a very fleet greyhound and an antelope. The antelope was off to the right of the road half a mile distant, and started to cross the road at right angles ahead of the train. The greyhound saw him start in the direction of the road, and ran to meet him, so regulating his pace as to intercept the antelope at the point where he crossed the road. The attention of the antelope being fixed upon the train, he did not see the greyhound until the latter was within twenty feet of him. Then the struggle commenced, each animal running at his utmost speed. The greyhound only ran about a quarter of a mile, when he gave up the race, and looked with seeming astonishment at the animal that beat him, as no other animal had ever done before. Applegate declared, in strong hyperbolical language, that "the antelope ran a mile before you could see the dust rise."

CROSS TO THE GREAT VALLEY OF THE PLATTE—BUFFALO HUNT—
DESCRIPTION OF THAT ANIMAL.

Ever since we crossed the Kansas River we had been traveling up Blue River, a tributary of the former. On the 17th of June we reached our last encampment on Blue. We here saw a band of Pawnee Indians, returning from a buffalo hunt. They had quantities of dried buffalo meat, of which they generously gave us a good supply. They were fine looking Indians, who did not shave their heads, but cut their hair short like white men. On the 18th of June we crossed from the Blue to the great Platte River, making a journey of from twenty-five to thirty miles, about the greatest distance we ever traveled in a single day. The road was splendid, and we drove some distance into the Platte bottom, and encamped in the open prairie without fuel. Next morning we left very early, without breakfast, having traveled two hundred and seventy-one miles from the rendezvous, according to the estimated distance recorded in my journal.

We traveled up the south bank of the Platte, which, at the point where we struck it, was from a mile to a mile and a half wide. Though not so remarkable as the famed and mysterious Nile (which,

from the mouth of the Atbara River to the Mediterranean Sea, runs through a desert some twelve hundred miles without receiving a single tributary), the Platte is still a remarkable stream. Like the Nile, it runs hundreds of miles through a desert without receiving any tributaries. Its general course is almost as straight as a direct line. It runs through a formation of sand of equal consistence; and this is the reason its course is so direct.

The valley of the Platte is about twenty miles wide, through the middle of which this wide, shallow, and muddy stream makes its rapid course. Its banks are low, not exceeding five or six feet in height; and the river bottoms on each side seem to the eye a dead level, covered with luxuriant grass. Ten miles from the river you come to the foot of the table lands, which are also apparently a level sandy plain, elevated some hundred and fifty feet above the river bottoms. On these plains grow the short buffalo grass, upon which the animal feeds during a portion of the year. As the dry season approaches, the water, which stands in pools on these table lands, dries up, and the buffalo are compelled to go to the Platte for water to drink. They start for water about 10 A. M., and always travel in single file, one after the other, and in parallel lines about twenty yards apart, and go in a direct line to the river. They invariably travel the same routes over and over again until they make a path some ten inches deep and twelve inches wide. These buffalo paths constituted quite an obstruction to our wagons, which were heavily laden at this point in our journey. Several axles were broken. We had been apprised of the danger in advance, and each wagon was supplied with an extra axle.

In making our monotonous journey up the smooth valley of the Platte, through the warm, genial sunshine of summer, the feeling of drowsiness was so great that it was extremely difficult to keep awake during the day. Instances occurred where drivers went to sleep on the road, sitting in the front of their wagons; and the oxen, being about as sleepy, would stop until the drivers were aroused from their slumber. My small wagon was used only for the family to ride in; and Mrs. Burnett and myself drove and slept alternately during the day.

One great difficulty on this part of the trip was the scarcity of fuel. Sometimes we found dry willows, sometimes we picked up pieces of drift-wood along the way, which we put into our wagons, and hauled them along until we needed them. At many points of the route up the Platte we had to use buffalo chips. By cutting a trench some ten inches deep, six inches wide, and two feet long, we were enabled to get along with very little fuel. At one or two places the wind was so severe that we were forced to use the trenches in order to make a fire at all.

On the 20th of June we sent out a party of hunters, who returned on the 24th with plenty of fresh buffalo-meat. We thought the flesh of the buffalo the most excellent of all flesh eaten by man. Its flavor is decidedly different from that of beef, and far superior, and the meat more digestible. On a trip like that, in that dry climate, our appetites were excellent; but, even making every reasonable allowance, I still think buffalo the sweetest meat in the world.

The American buffalo is a peculiar animal, remarkably hardy, and much fleetier of foot than any one would suppose from his round, short figure. It requires a fleet horse to overtake him. His sense of smell is remarkably acute, while those of sight and hearing are very dull. If the wind blows from the hunter to the buffalo, it is impossible to approach him. I remember that, on one occasion, while we were traveling up the Platte, I saw a band of some fifty buffaloes running obliquely toward the river on the other side from us, and some three miles off; and, the moment that their leader struck the stream of tainted atmosphere passing from us to them, he and the rest of the herd turned at right angles from their former course, and fled in the direction of the wind.

On one occasion five of us went out on fleet horses to hunt buffaloes. We soon found nine full-grown animals, feeding near the head of a ravine. The wind blew from them to us, and their keen scent was thus worthless to them, as the smell will only travel with the wind. We rode quietly up the ravine, until we arrived at a point only about one hundred yards distant, when we formed in line, side by side, and the order was given to charge. We put our horses at once to their utmost speed; and the loud clattering of their hoofs over the dry, hard ground at once attracted the attention of the buffaloes, which raised their heads and gazed at us for an instant and then turned and fled. By the time they started we were within fifty yards of them. The race was over a level plain, and we gradually gained upon the fleeing game; but, when we approached within twenty yards of them, we could plainly see that they let out a few more links, and ran much faster. I was riding a fleet Indian pony, and was ahead of all my comrades except Mr. Garrison, who rode a blooded American mare. He dashed in ahead of me, and fired with a large horse pistol at the largest buffalo, giving the animal a slight wound. The moment the buffalo felt himself wounded that moment he bore off from the others, they continuing close together, and he running by himself.

I followed the wounded buffalo, and my comrades followed the others. The moment I began to press closely upon the wounded animal, he turned suddenly around, and faced me with his shaggy head, black horns, and gleaming eyes. My pony stopped instantly, and I rode around the old bull to get a shot at his side, knowing that

it would be idle to shoot him in the head, as no rifle ball will penetrate the brain of a buffalo bull. But the animal would keep his head toward me. I knew my pony had been trained to stand wherever he was left, and I saw that the wounded bull never charged at the horse. So I determined to dismount and get a shot on foot. I would go a few yards from my horse, and occasionally the buffalo would bound toward me, and then I would dodge behind my pony, which stood like a statue, not exhibiting the slightest fear. For some reason the wounded animal would not attack the pony. Perhaps the buffalo had been before chased by Indians on horseback, and for that reason was afraid of the pony. At last I got a fair opportunity, and shot the buffalo through the lungs. The moment he felt the shot, he turned and fled. The shot through the lungs is the most fatal to the buffalo, as he soon smothers from the effects of internal hemorrhage. It is a singular fact that, before a buffalo is wounded, he will never turn and face his pursuer, but will run at his best speed, even until the hunter is by his side; but the moment a buffalo is wounded, even slightly, he will quit the band, and when pressed by the hunter will turn and face him. The animal seems to think that, when wounded, his escape by flight is impossible, and his only chance is in combat.

On the 27th of June our people had halted for lunch at noon, and to rest the teams and allow the oxen to graze. Our wagons were about three hundred yards from the river, and were strung out in line to the distance of one mile. While taking our lunch we saw seven buffalo bulls on the opposite side of the river, coming toward us, as if they intended to cross the river in the face of our whole caravan. When they arrived on the opposite bank they had a full view of us; and yet they deliberately entered the river, wading a part of the distance, and swimming the remainder. When we saw that they were determined to cross at all hazards, our men took their rifles, formed in line between the wagons and the river, and awaited the approach of the animals. So soon as they rose the bank, they came on in a run, broke boldly through the line of men, and bore to the left of the wagons. Three of them were killed, and most of the others wounded.

CROSS THE SOUTH FORK—ARRIVE AT FORT LARAMIE—CHEYENNE
CHIEF—CROSS THE NORTH FORK—DEATHS OF PAINE AND
STEVENSON—CROSS GREEN RIVER—ARRIVE
AT FORT HALL.

On the 29th of June we arrived at a grove of timber, on the south bank of the South Fork of the Platte. This was the only timber we had seen since we struck the river, except on the islands, which were covered with cottonwoods and willows. From our first camp

upon the Platte to this point, we had traveled, according to my estimates recorded in my journal, one hundred and seventy-three miles, in eleven days.

On July 1st we made three boats by covering our wagon boxes or beds with green buffalo hides sewed together, stretched tightly over the boxes, flesh side out, and tacked on with large tacks; and the boxes, thus covered, were turned up to the sun until the hides were thoroughly dry. This process of drying the green hides had to be repeated several times. From July 1st to 5th, inclusive, we were engaged in crossing the river. On the 7th we arrived at the south bank of the North Fork of the Platte, having traveled a distance of twenty-nine miles from the South Fork. We had not seen any prairie chickens since we left the Blue. On the 9th we saw three beautiful wild horses. On the 14th we arrived at Fort Laramie, where we remained two days repairing our wagons. We had traveled from the crossing of the South Fork one hundred and forty-one miles in nine days. Prices of articles at this trading post: Coffee, \$1.50 a pint; brown sugar, the same; flour, unbolted, 25 cents a pound; powder, \$1.50 a pound; lead, 75 cents a pound; percussion caps, \$1.50 a box; calico, very inferior, \$1.00 a yard.

At the fort we found the Cheyenne chief and some of his people. He was a tall, trim, noble-looking Indian, aged about thirty. The Cheyennes at that time boasted that they had never shed the blood of the white man. He went alone very freely among our people, and I happened to meet him at one of our camps, where there was a foolish, rash young man, who wantonly insulted the chief. Though the chief did not understand the insulting words, he clearly understood the insulting tone and gestures. I saw from the expression of his countenance that the chief was most indignant, though perfectly cool and brave. He made no reply in words, but walked away slowly; and, when some twenty feet from the man who had insulted him, he turned around, and solemnly and slowly shook the forefinger of his right hand at the young man several times, as much as to say, "I will attend to your case."

I saw that trouble was coming, and I followed the chief, and by kind, earnest gestures made him understand at last that this young man was considered by us all as a half-witted fool, unworthy of the notice of any sensible man; and that we never paid attention to what he said, as we hardly considered him responsible for his language. The moment the chief comprehended my meaning I saw a change come over his countenance, and he went away perfectly satisfied. He was a clear-headed man; and, though unlettered, he understood human nature.

In traveling up the South Fork we saw several Indians, who kept at a distance, and never manifested any disposition to molest us

in any way. They saw we were mere travelers through their country, and would only destroy a small amount of their game. Besides, they must have been impressed with the due sense of our power. Our long line of wagons, teams, cattle, and men, on the smooth plains, and under the clear skies of the Platte, made a most grand appearance. They had never before seen any spectacle like it. They, no doubt, supposed we had cannon concealed in our wagons. A few years before a military expedition had been sent out from Fort Leavenworth to chastise some of the wild prairie tribes for depredations committed against the whites. General Bennett Riley, then Captain Riley, had command, and had with him some cannon. In a skirmish with the Indians, in the open prairie, he had used his cannon, killing some of the Indians at a distance beyond a rifle shot. This new experience had taught them a genuine dread of big guns.

The Indians always considered the wild game as much their property as they did the country in which it was found. Though breeding and maintaining the game cost them no labor, yet it lived and fattened on their grass and herbage, and was as substantially within the power of these roving people and skillful hunters as the domestic animals of the white man.

On the 24th of July we crossed the North Fork of the Platte by fording, without difficulty, having traveled the distance of one hundred and twenty-two miles from Fort Laramie in nine days. On the 27th we arrived at the Sweetwater, having traveled from the North Fork fifty-five miles in three days. On the 3rd of August, while traveling up the Sweetwater, we first came in sight of the eternal snows of the Rocky Mountains. This to us was a grand and magnificent sight. We had never before seen the perpetually snow-clad summit of a mountain. This day William Martin brought into camp the foot of a very rare carnivorous animal, much like the hyena, and with no name. It was of a dark color, had very large teeth, and was thought to be strong enough to kill a half-grown buffalo.

On the 4th of August Mr. Paine died of fever, and we remained in camp to bury him. We buried him in the wild, shelterless plains, close to the new road we had made, and the funeral scene was most sorrowful and impressive. Mr. Garrison, a Methodist preacher, a plain, humble man, delivered a most touching and beautiful prayer at the lonely grave.

On the 5th, 6th and 7th we crossed the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and on the evening of the 7th we first drank of the waters that flow into the great Pacific. The first Pacific water we saw was that of a large, pure spring. On the 9th we came to the Big Sandy at noon. This day Stevenson died of fever, and we buried

him on the sterile banks of that stream. On the 11th we crossed Green River, so called from its green color. It is a beautiful stream, containing fine fish. On the margins of this stream there are extensive groves of small cottonwood trees, about nine inches in diameter, with low and brushy tops. These trees are cut down by the hunters and trappers in winter for the support of their mules and hardy Indian ponies. The animals feed on the tender twigs, and on the bark of the smaller limbs, and in this way manage to live. Large quantities of this timber are thus destroyed annually.

On the 12th of August we were informed that Doctor Whitman had written a letter, stating that the Catholic missionaries had discovered, by the aid of their Flathead Indian pilot, a pass through the mountains by way of Fort Bridger, which was shorter than the old route. We, therefore, determined to go by the fort. There was a heavy frost with thin ice this morning. On the 14th we arrived at Fort Bridger, situated on Black's Fork of Green River, having traveled from our first camp on the Sweetwater two hundred and nineteen miles in eighteen days. Here we overtook the missionaries. On the 17th we arrived on the banks of Bear River, a clear, beautiful stream, with abundance of good fish and plenty of wild ducks and geese. On the 22nd we arrived at the great Soda Springs, when we left Bear River for Fort Hall, at which place we arrived on the 27th, having traveled two hundred and thirty-five miles from Fort Bridger in thirteen days.

Fort Hall was then a trading post, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, and was under the charge of Mr. Grant, who was exceedingly kind and hospitable. The fort was situated on the south bank of Snake River, in a wide, fertile valley covered with luxuriant grass and watered by numerous springs and small streams. This valley had once been a great resort for buffaloes, and their skulls were scattered around in every direction. We saw the skulls of these animals for the last time at Fort Boise, beyond which point they were never seen. The company had bands of horses and herds of cattle grazing on these rich bottom lands.

Up to this point the route over which we had passed was, perhaps, the finest natural road, of the same length, to be found in the world. Only a few loaded wagons had ever made their way to Fort Hall, and were there abandoned. Doctor Whitman in 1836 had taken a wagon as far as Fort Boise, by making a cart on two of the wheels and placing the axletree and the other two wheels in his cart. ("Gray's Oregon," page 133.)

We here parted with our respected pilot, Captain John Gant. Dr. Marcus Whitman was with us at the fort, and was our pilot from there to Grand Ronde, where he left us in charge of an Indian pilot, whose name was Stikas, and who proved to be both faithful and

competent. The doctor left us to have his grist-mill put in order by the time we should reach his mission.

We now arrived at a most critical period in our most adventurous journey, and we had many misgivings as to our ultimate success in making our way with our wagons, teams and families. We had yet to accomplish the untried and most difficult portion of our long and exhaustive journey. We could not anticipate at what moment we might be compelled to abandon our wagons in the mountains, pack our scant supplies on our poor oxen, and make our way on foot through this terribly rough country as best we could. We fully comprehended the situation, but we never faltered in our inflexible determination to accomplish the trip, if within the limits of possibility, with the resources at our command. Doctor Whitman assured us that we could succeed, and encouraged and aided us with every means in his power. I consulted Mr. Grant as to his opinion of the practicability of taking our wagons through. He replied that, while he would not say it was impossible for us Americans to make the trip in our wagons, he could not himself see how it could be done. He had only traveled the pack-trail, and certainly no wagons could follow that route, but there might be a practical road found by leaving the trail at certain points.

LEAVE FORT HALL—SAGEBRUSH LANDS—SALMON FALLS—THE
SPEAR OF THE INDIAN FISHERMAN—CROSS SNAKE
RIVER—KILL A LARGE SALMON.

On the 30th of August we quitted Fort Hall, many of our young men having left us with pack-trains. Our route lay down Snake River for some distance. The road was rocky and rough, except in the dry valleys, and these were covered with a thick growth of sage or wormwood, which was from two to three feet high, and offered a great obstruction to the first five or six wagons passing through it. The soil where this melancholy shrub was found appeared to be too dry and sterile to produce anything else. It was very soft on the surface, and easily worked up into a most disagreeable dust, as fine as ashes or flour.

The taste of the sage is exceedingly bitter; the shrub has a brown, somber appearance, and a most disagreeable smell. The stem at the surface of the ground is from one to two inches in diameter, and soon branches, so as to form a thick, brushy top. The texture of the stem is peculiar and unlike that of any other shrub, being all bark and no sap or heart, and appears like the outside bark of the grapevine. How the sap ascends from the root to the branches, or whether the shrub draws its nutriment from the air, I am not able to decide. One thing I remember well, that the stems of the green growing sage were good for fuel and burned most readily, and so

rapidly that the supply had to be continually renewed, showing that they were not only dry, but of very slight, porous texture. Had the sage been as stout and hard as other shrubbery of the same size we should have been compelled to cut our wagonway through it, and could never have passed over it as we did, crushing it beneath the feet of our oxen and the wheels of our wagons.

The geographical features of the Pacific Coast are Asiatic in their appearance, being composed of mountains and valleys. Our hills swell to mountains, and our valleys are to the eye a dead level, yet they generally descend about nine or ten feet to the mile. We have consequently very little gently undulating land, such as is generally found in the great Mississippi Valley. Gibbon, speaking of the route of the army of the Emperor Julian well but concisely describes the sageplains of this coast: "The country was a plain throughout, as even as the sea, and full of wormwood; and, if any other kinds of shrubs or reeds grew there, they had all an aromatic smell, but no trees could be seen." ("Decline and Fall," chapter xxiv, pp. 477-8.)

Colonel Mercer of Oregon, delivered a lecture in the city of New York on April 6, 1878, as appears from the telegram to the "Daily Alta" of the 7th, in which he set forth the wonderful fertility of the sagebrush lands, which until recently have been supposed to be valueless. The sagebrush lands through which we passed in 1843 appeared to be worthless, not only because of the apparent sterility of the soil, but for the want of water. With plentiful irrigation, I think it quite probable that these lands in most places, might be rendered fruitful. Water is a great fertilizer and nothing but experiment can actually demonstrate how far these wilderness plains can be redeemed.

On the 7th of September, 1843, we arrived at the Salmon Falls on Snake River, where we purchased from the Snake Indians dried and fresh salmon, giving one ball and one charge of powder for each dried fish. We found several lodges of Indians here who were very poorly clad, and who made a business of fishing at the falls. The falls were about eight feet perpendicular at that stage of water, with rapids below for some distance. The stream is divided upon the rapids into various narrow channels, through which the waters pass with a very shallow and rapid current, so that the fisherman can wade across them. The salmon are compelled to pass up these channels, and readily fall a prey to the quick, sharp spear of the Indian fisherman. The spear consists of a strong, smooth pole, ten or twelve feet long and an inch and a half in diameter, made of hard tough wood, upon one end of which there is fastened a piece of sharp-pointed buckhorn about four inches long. The larger end of this piece of buckhorn is hollowed out to the depth of about three

inches and fastened on the end of the pole, which is tapered to fit into it. To the middle of this buckhorn there is securely fastened a thong or string of sinew, the other end of which is firmly attached to the pole about one foot above the buckhorn, leaving a considerable slack in the line. With this spear the Indian fisherman lies down or sits close to one of these narrow channels with the point of his spear resting near where the fish must pass. In this position he remains motionless until he sees a fish immediately opposite the point of the spear, as the fish slowly ascends the rapid current; when, with the quick motion of a juggler, he pushes his spear clear through the salmon before this powerful fish can dodge it. The buckhorn at once slips off the end of the pole on the other side of the fish the first flounce he makes; but he is securely held by the thong attached to the pole. No spear could be more skillfully designed or more effectually used than this.

One of our emigrants, having been informed before he started on the trip that the clear, living waters of the Columbia and its tributaries were full of salmon, had brought all the way from Missouri a three-pronged harpoon, called a gig. The metallic portion of this fishing instrument was securely riveted on the end of a smooth, strong pole about ten feet long, and two inches in diameter. The skillful fisherman held this gig in his right hand, raised above his head, and, when he saw a fish fifteen or twenty feet distant, he would pitch the weapon at his prey with such a sure aim as seldom to miss his mark.

This emigrant was joyful when we arrived at the falls, it being the first point where he could use his gig. He soon brought forth his instrument from the bottom of his wagon, where it had remained unused so long, and sallied forth to capture salmon. We all watched with deep interest, as he stood by one of these narrow channels, gig in hand. Very soon we saw him throw his gig, but he missed his mark. Again and again he tried his skill, but always failed. The fact was that the salmon, one of the most muscular of fishes, with keen sight and quick motion, had seen the thrown gig in time, and had effectually dodged it. Our emigrant came back greatly mortified because the Indians could beat him in catching salmon. He understood, after this trial, the difference between the agility of the salmon of the Columbia and that of the sluggish catfish of the Mississippi.

Before reaching the Salmon Falls we passed a large spring on the opposite side of Snake River. This spring furnished water enough for a large creek, which fell perpendicularly from a wall of basaltic rock two hundred feet high, forming a most beautiful scene on the river.

On the 10th of September we crossed the Snake River by fording

without difficulty, and in crossing we killed a salmon weighing twenty-three pounds, one of our wagons running over it as it lay on the bottom of the pebbly stream.

The full-grown male and female salmon from the ocean enter the streams that flow into it and, guided by a wonderful instinct, ascend to the upper branches, where they can deposit their numerous spawn in a place secure from enemies. The waters of these mountain streams are so clear as to remind one of Dryden's description—

"Of shallow brooks, that flow so clear,
The bottom did the top appear."

In the pebbly bottoms of these tributary streams the female salmon hollows out a cavity of sufficient depth to form an eddy, in which she can deposit her spawn without the danger of their being swept away by the current. The one we killed was doubtless in her nest which she refused to quit.

From all the information I was able to obtain while residing in Oregon, grown salmon which once leave the ocean never return. This was the opinion of Sir James Douglas, which was confirmed by my own observation. But there seems to be a difference of opinion on the question. I have lately conversed with B. B. Redding upon the subject, and it is his opinion that about ten per cent. return alive to the ocean, as about that proportion are caught in the Sacramento River on the upper side of the gill nets used by the fishermen. This may be the more correct opinion.

The male salmon is armed with strong, sharp teeth, and they fight and wound each other severely. While the female is making and guarding her nest, her mate remains close by, watching and waiting with the greatest fidelity and patience; and, when any other fish approaches too near, he darts at him with the utmost swiftness and ferocity. The spawn is always deposited in the pebbly bed of the stream where the water is swift and comparatively shallow, and where other fish are less likely to molest them. The eggs hatch in from forty to forty-five days.

For hours I have watched the efforts of salmon to pass over the Willamette Falls at Oregon City. For a space of one or two minutes I would not see a fish in the air. Then, all at once, I would see one leap out of the water, followed immediately by great numbers. Some would rise from ten to fifteen feet, while many would not ascend more than four or five; but all seemed equally determined to succeed. They had selected the most practicable point and approached very near the column of descending water, and rose from the eddy caused by the reflow. Occasionally one would go over, but the great majority pitched with their heads plump against the wall of rock behind the torrent, and fell back more or less wounded, to try again. There was a shelf in the rock three or four feet below the top, and

I have seen salmon catch on this shelf, rest for an instant, then flounce off and fall into the water below. So long as the salmon is alive its head will be found up stream and every effort made, though feeble, will be to ascend. Sometimes, when in very shallow water, the fish may descend to a short distance to escape an enemy for the time, but its constant instinct is to go up higher until it reaches the place to deposit its eggs.

BOILING SPRING—FORT BOISE—BURNT RIVER—THE LONE PINE—
THE GRAND RONDE—THE BLUE MOUNTAINS—ARRIVE AT DR.
WHITMAN'S MISSION—ARRIVE AT WALLA WALLA.

On the 14th of September we passed the Boiling Spring. Its water is hot enough to cook an egg. It runs out at three different places, forming a large branch, which runs off smoking and foaming. It rises half a mile from a tall range of hills covered with basaltic rock, and the plains around are covered with round rocks of the same kind. The water is clear and rises at the head of a small ravine.

On the 20th of September we arrived at Fort Boise, then in charge of Mr. Payette, having traveled from Fort Hall, two hundred and seventy-three miles, in twenty-one days. Mr. Payette, the manager, was kind and very polite. On the 21st we recrossed the Snake River by fording, which was deep but safe. On the 24th we reached Burnt River, so named from the many fires that have occurred there, destroying considerable portions of timber. It hardly deserves to be called a river, being only a creek of fair size. The road up this stream was then a terrible one, as the latter runs between two ranges of tall mountains through a narrow valley full of timber, which we had not the force or time to remove.

On the 27th of September we had some rain during the night, and next morning left Burnt River. Today we saw many of the most beautiful objects in nature. In the rear, on our right and left, were ranges of tall mountains, covered on the sides with magnificent forests of pine, the mountain tops being dressed in a robe of pure snow, and around their summits the dense masses of black clouds wreathed themselves in fanciful shapes, the sun glancing through the open spaces upon the gleaming mountains. We passed through some most beautiful valleys and encamped on the branch of the Powder River at the Lone Pine.

This noble tree stood in the center of a most lovely valley about ten miles from any other timber. It could be seen at the distance of many miles, rearing its majestic form above the surrounding plain, and constituted a beautiful landmark for the guidance of the traveler. Many teams had passed on before me, and at intervals, as I drove along, I would raise my head and look at that

beautiful green pine. At last, on looking up as usual, the tree was gone. I was perplexed for a moment to know whether I was going in the right direction. There was the plain, beaten wagon road before me, and I drove on until I reached the camp just at dark. That brave old pine, which had withstood the storms and snows of centuries, had fallen at last by the vandal hands of man. Some of our inconsiderate people had cut it down for fuel, but it was too green to burn. It was a useless and most unfortunate act. Had I been there in time I should have begged those woodmen to "spare that tree."

On the 29th and 30th of September we passed through rich, beautiful valleys between ranges of snowclad mountains whose sides were covered with noble pine forests. On October 1st we came into and through Grand Ronde, one of the most beautiful valleys in the world, embosomed among the Blue Mountains, which are covered with magnificent pines. It was estimated to be about one hundred miles in circumference. It was generally rich prairie covered with luxuriant grass and having numerous beautiful streams passing through it, most of which rise from springs at the foot of the mountains bordering the valley. In this valley the camas root abounds, which the Indians dried upon hot rocks. We purchased some from them and found it quite palatable to our keen appetites.

On the 2d of October we ascended the mountain ridge at the Grande Ronde and descended on the other side of the ridge to a creek, where we encamped. These hills were terrible. On the 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th, we passed through the Blue Mountains, arriving at their foot on the 6th and encamping upon a beautiful stream of water. On the morning of the 5th there was a snow storm on the mountain. During our passage through the Blue Mountains we had great difficulty in finding our cattle, and the road was very rough in many places. Our camp was about three miles from the Indian village, and from the Indians we purchased Indian corn, peas, and Irish potatoes, in any desired quantity. I have never tasted a greater luxury than the potatoes we ate on this occasion. We had been so long without fresh vegetables that we were almost famished, and consequently we feasted this day excessively. We gave the Indians in exchange some articles of clothing, which they were most anxious to purchase. When two parties are both as anxious to barter as were the Indians and ourselves, it is very easy to strike a bargain.

On the 10th of October we arrived within three miles of Doctor Whitman's mission and remained in camp until the 14th.

The exhausting tedium of such a trip and the attendant vexations have a great effect upon the majority of men, especially upon those of weak minds. Men, under such circumstances, become

childish, petulant, and obstinate. I remember that while we were at the mission of Doctor Whitman, who had performed such hard labor for us, and was deserving of our warmest gratitude, he was most ungenerously accused by some of our people of selfish motives in conducting us past his establishment, where we could procure fresh supplies of flour and potatoes. This foolish, false, and ungrateful charge was based upon the fact that he asked us a dollar a bushel for wheat, and forty cents for potatoes. As our people had been accustomed to sell their wheat at from fifty to sixty cents a bushel, and their potatoes at from twenty to twenty-five cents, in the Western States, they thought the prices demanded by the doctor amounted to something like extortion, not reflecting that he had to pay at least twice as much for his own supplies of merchandise, and could not afford to sell his produce as low as they did theirs at home. They were somewhat like a certain farmer in Missouri at an early day, who concluded that twenty cents a bushel was a fair price for corn, and that he would not sell for more nor less. But experience soon taught him that when the article was higher than his price he could readily sell, but when it was lower he could not sell at all; and he came to the sensible conclusion that he must avail himself of the rise in order to compensate him for the fall in prices. So obstinate were some of our people that they would not purchase of the doctor. I remember one case particularly, where an intimate friend of mine, whose supplies of food were nearly exhausted, refused to purchase, though urged to do so by me, until the wheat was all sold. The consequence was that I had to divide provisions with him before we reached the end of our journey.

On the 16th of October we arrived at Fort Walla Walla, then under charge of Mr. McKinley, having traveled from Fort Boise, two hundred and two miles, in twenty-four days, and from the rendezvous, sixteen hundred and ninety-one miles, between the 22nd of May and the 16th of October, being one hundred and forty-seven days. Average distance per day, eleven and one-half miles.

DESCEND THE RIVER TO THE DALLES—LEAVE MY FAMILY THERE—
GO TO VANCOUVER AND RETURN—GOVERNOR FREMONT.

A portion of our emigrants left their wagons and cattle at Walla Walla, and descended the Columbia in boats; while another, and the larger portion, made their way with their teams and wagons to The Dalles, whence they descended to the Cascades on rafts, and thence to Fort Vancouver in boats and canoes. William Beagle and I had agreed at the rendezvous not to separate until we reached the end of our journey. We procured from Mr. McKinley, at Walla Walla, an old Hudson's Bay Company's boat, constructed expressly

for the navigation of the Columbia and its tributaries. These boats are very light, yet strong. They are open, about forty-five feet long, five feet wide, and three feet deep, made of light, tough materials, and clinker built. They are made in this manner so that they may be carried around the Falls of the Columbia, and let down over the Cascades. When taken out of the water and carried over the portage, it requires the united exertions of forty or fifty Indians, who take the vessel on their shoulders, amid shouts and hurras, and thus carry it sometimes three-fourths of a mile, without once letting it down. At the Cascades it is let down by means of ropes in the hands of the Canadian boatmen.

We employed an Indian pilot, who stood with a stout, long, broad paddle in the bow of the boat, while Beagle stood at the stern, holding a long steering oar, such as were used upon flat-bottoms and keel-boats in the Western States. I remember that my friend Beagle, before we left Walla Walla, expressed great confidence in his skill in steering, as he had often passed the Ohio Rapids at Louisville. But these rapids were nothing to those on the Columbia. I have seen Beagle turn as pale as a corpse when passing through the terrible rapids on this river.

Our Indian pilot was very cool, determined, and intrepid; and Beagle always obeyed him, right or wrong. On one occasion, I remember, we were passing down a terrible rapid, with almost the speed of a race-horse, when a huge rock rose above the water before us, against which the swift and mighty volume of the river furiously dashed in vain, and then suddenly turned to the right, almost at right angles. The Indian told Beagle to hold the bow of the boat directly toward that rock, as if intending to run plump upon it, while the rest of us pulled upon our oars with all our might, so as to give her such a velocity as not to be much affected by the surging waves. The Indian stood calm and motionless in the bow, paddle in hand, with his features set as if prepared to meet immediate death; and, when we were within from twenty to thirty feet of that terrible rock, as quick as thought he plunged his long, broad paddle perpendicularly into the water on the left side of the bow, and with it gave a sudden wrench, and the boat instantly turned upon its center to the right, and we passed the rock in safety.

While passing through these dangers I was not much alarmed, but after they were passed I could never think of them without a sense of fear. Three of our emigrants were drowned just above the dalles, but we reached them in safety, sending our boat through them, while the families walked around them on dry land. These dalles are a great natural curiosity, but they have been so often

described that I deem it unnecessary to attempt any description myself.

When we arrived at the Methodist mission, located at the foot of the dalles, I saw at once that there must some day grow up a town there, as that was the head of safe steam navigation. From there to the Cascades, a distance of about fifty miles, the river is entirely smooth and without a rapid. At the Cascades there is a portage to be made, but once below them and there is nothing but smooth water to the ocean. I determined at once to settle at The Dalles; and, after consultation with Mr. Perkins, the minister in charge, I left my family there and proceeded to Vancouver, where I arrived about the 7th of November, 1843.

At Fort Vancouver I found Governor Fremont, then Lieutenant Fremont, who had been there a few days. He had left his men and animals at The Dalles, and had descended the river to the fort for the purpose of purchasing supplies, to enable him to make the trip overland to California during that winter. The preceding year he had made an exploring trip to the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, but this was his first journey to Oregon and California.

The Hudson's Bay Company furnished him, on the credit of the United States, all the supplies he required, and sent them up the river in one of their boats, such as I have already described, and three Chinook canoes. These canoes are substantially of the same model as the clipper-ship, and most probably suggested the idea of such a form of marine architecture. They are made out of a solid piece of white-cedar timber, which is usually one-quarter of the first cut of a large tree. It is a soft wood, but very tough. This timber grows upon the banks of the Columbia, below Vancouver, to a very large size. It is easily split with wedges. The Indians manage to cut and burn down the trees, and then cut and burn off a part of the trunk, and split it into quarters. Then they hollow out the inside of the canoe, mostly by burning. For this purpose they kindle small fires along the whole length of the canoe, which they keep steadily burning, and, by careful and constant watching, they cause the fires to burn when and how they please. The outside they shape with their tomahawks, and, before these were introduced, they used sharp flint-stones for axes. These canoes are usually about thirty feet long, three feet wide, and two feet deep, and are sharp at both ends, with a gradual taper from near the center. No craft could have a more handsome model, or run more swiftly. They are light, strong, elastic, and durable, and are propelled by paddles. The boat was navigated by Canadian French, and the canoes by Indians.

Doctor McLoughlin and Mr. Douglas then chief factors at the fort, advised me to go for my family, and settle in the lower portion of

Oregon, and kindly offered me a passage up and down on their boat. We left the fort about the 11th of November in the evening, while it was raining. It came down gently, but steadily. We reached the foot of the rapids, three miles below the Cascades, before sundown on the third day. We found that the Indians could propel their canoes with paddles much faster than we could our boat with oars. We ascended the river to a distance of about one mile above the foot of the rapids; and just before dark we encamped upon a sand-beach, the only spot where we could do so without ascending higher up the rapids.

The Indians, with the three canoes, had passed on farther up the river, and, although we fired signal-shots, they could not be induced to return. They had with them the sugar and tea, and the Indian lodge, composed of buffalo skins, neatly dressed and sewed together. This lodge was in a conical form, about fourteen feet in diameter at the base and eighteen feet high, with a hole at the base of about two by three feet for a door, and one in the top for the escape of the smoke; a deer-skin formed the door-shutter, and the fire was built in the center, around which we sat with our backs to the lodge, and when we lay down we put our feet to the fire and our heads from it. In this way we could be warm and comfortable, and free from the effects of the wind and rain, without being at all incommoded by the smoke from our small fire, as it rose straight up and passed out through the hole in the top of the lodge. The lodge was supported by long, strong, smooth poles, over which it was tightly stretched. It was far superior to any cloth tent I ever saw.

When we encamped it was cloudy, but not raining, and we were very hungry after our day's hard work; but our bill of fare consisted of salt salmon and cold bread. We knew, from the appearance of the thickening but smooth clouds, that we should most likely have a rainy night. The lower portion of Oregon lies between the tall Cascade range of mountains and the ocean. This range runs almost parallel with the Pacific Ocean, and about a hundred and twenty-five miles from it. The clouds in the rainy season break upon this range; and the Cascades are at the point where the mighty Columbia cuts at right angles through it. We had been told that it rained oftener and harder at the Cascades than at almost any other point in Oregon, and, to our injury, we found it true.

Supper being ended, we laid ourselves down before a large fire. Governor Fremont wrapped himself in his cloak, keeping on all his clothes, and lay down upon a blanket. For myself, I had with me two pairs of large, heavy blankets, one pair of which I put folded under me, and covered myself with the other. Soon after we had lain down the rain began to fall gently, but continued steadily to

increase. At first, I thought it might rain as much as it pleased without wetting through my blankets, but before day it came down in torrents, and I found the water running under me, and into the pockets of my pantaloons and the tops of my boots. It was a cold rain, and the fire was extinguished. I could not endure all this, and I sat up during most of the remaining portion of the night upon a log of wood, with one pair of blankets thrown over my head, so as to fall all around me. In this way I managed to keep warm, but the weight of the wet blankets was great, and my neck at last rebelled against the oppression. I finally became so fatigued and sleepy that just before day, when the rain had ceased, I threw myself down across some logs of wood, and in that condition slept until daylight. As for Governor Fremont, he never moved, but lay and slept as well as if in comfortable quarters. My position was in a lower place on the beach than his, and this was the reason why the water ran under me and not under him.

Next morning we rose fresh and fasting and ascended to the Indian encampment, where the Governor found our Indians comfortably housed in the lodge, cooking breakfast. He was somewhat vexed, and made them hustle out in short order.

It took us some days to make the portage, it raining nearly all the while. At the head of the Cascades there were several large, projecting rocks, under one side of which the Indians could lie on the clean, dry sand, secure from the rain. They would build a fire in front and sit or lie under the projecting rocks; and, as they were at home with their kindred and families, they were in no hurry to go forward, and were not much disposed to go out in bad weather. At the Cascades there is a celebrated salmon fishery, where the Indians then lived in considerable numbers, supporting themselves in the summer upon fresh, and in the winter upon dried, salmon.

We were anxious to proceed, as Governor Fremont had still to make the perilous journey to California, but there were only some five to eight whites to several hundred Indians. But the cool, determined, yet prudent, Fremont managed to command our Indians and induce them to work. When nothing else would avail, he would put out their fires. Finding it necessary to work or shiver, they preferred to work.

When we had reloaded our craft, we set forward for The Dalles, and we had not gone more than ten miles before we could see clear out and beyond the clouds into the pure, blue sky. We were almost vexed to think we had been so near to a sunny region all the time we had been suffering so much from the rain. We soon reached a point on the river above where there had been no rain, and from that point to The Dalles we had cold, clear, frosty nights. We arrived in The Dalles about ten days after leaving Vancouver. I

went with the Governor to his camp of about forty men and one hundred animals.

I was with Governor Fremont about ten days. I had never known him personally before this trip. I knew he was on the way, but he traveled usually with his own company, and did not mingle much with the emigrants, as he could not properly do so, his men being under military discipline and our emigrants not. He was then about thirty years old, modest in appearance, and calm and gentle in manner. His men all loved him intensely. He gave his orders with great mildness and simplicity, but they had to be obeyed. There was no shrinking from duty. He was like a father to those under his command. At that time I thought I could endure as much hardship as most men, especially a small, slender man like Governor Fremont, but I was wholly mistaken. He had a small foot, and wore a thin calf-skin boot, and yet he could endure more cold than I could with heavy boots on. I never traveled with a more pleasant companion than Governor Fremont. His bearing toward me was as kind as that of a brother.

GO WITH MY FAMILY TO VANCOUVER—INDIAN TRADITION—THE TOWN OF LINNTON.

I returned with my family to Fort Vancouver on the 26th of November, 1843, and, as we passed the place of our encampment on the sand beach below the Cascades, the Canadian boatmen pointed toward it and laughed.

When we arrived at the Cascades on our return voyage we carried our baggage upon our shoulders three-fourths of a mile, when we reloaded and then "jumped" the rapids below. Until we had passed the rapids on our downward voyage, I had no adequate conception of the dangers we had passed through on the voyage from Walla Walla to the Dalles. During that perilous passage I was one of the oarsmen, and sat with my back to the bow of the boat, thus having no fair opportunity to observe well. My attention was mainly confined to my own portion of the work, and I had but little time to look up. But, in running the rapids below the Cascades, I had nothing to do but look on. It was almost literal "jumping."

There was then an Indian tradition that about a hundred years before the Cascades did not exist, but that there was a succession of rapids from the Dalles to where the Cascades are now. The whole volume of the Columbia is now confined to a narrow channel, and falls about thirty feet in the distance of a quarter of a mile. This tradition said that the river gradually cut under the mountain until the projecting mass of huge stones and tough clay slid into the river and dammed up the stream to the height of some thirty

feet, thus producing slack water to the Dalles. And I must say that every appearance, to my mind, sustains this view.

The Columbia, like most rivers, has a strip of bottom land covered with timber on one side or the other, but at the Cascades this bottom land is very narrow and has a very different appearance from the bottoms at places on the river above and below. The mountain on the south side of the river looks precisely as if a vast landslide had taken place there, and the huge rocks that lift their gray, conical heads above the water at a low stage go to prove that they could not have withstood that terrible current for many centuries. In the winter when the water is at its lowest stage, immense masses of thick ice come down over these Cascades and strike with tremendous force against the rocks, and the consequent wearing away must have been too great for those rocks to have been in that position many centuries.

But there is another fact that seems to me to be almost conclusive. As we passed upon the river the water was at a very low stage, and yet some twenty miles above we could see stumps of various sizes standing as thick beneath the water as trees in a forest. The water was clear and we had a perfect view of them. They were entirely sound and were rather sharp in form toward the top. It was evident that the trees had not grown in the water, but it had been backed up over their roots and the tops and trunks had died and decayed, while the stumps being under water, had remained substantially sound; and the reason why they were sharp at the top was that the heart of the timber was more durable than the sapwood which had decayed. Another reason for the sharpness of the stumps at the top is the abrasion caused by the floating masses of ice.

It was the opinion of Governor Fremont that these stumps had been placed in this position by a slide which took them from their original site into the river. But I must think that opinion erroneous because the slide could hardly have been so great in length, and the appearance of the adjacent hills does not indicate an event of that magnitude. It is much more rational, I think, to suppose that the slide took place at the Cascades, and that the Indian tradition is true. Another reason is that the river at the points where these stumps are found is quite wide, showing an increase of width by the backing up of the water over the bottoms.

I procured a room for my family at Vancouver until I could build a cabin. General M. M. McCarver and myself had agreed that we would select a town site at the head of ship navigation on the Willamette River. The general, having no family with him, arrived at the fort some time before I did, and selected a spot on the Willamette about five miles above its mouth at what we then supposed to be the head of ship navigation. Here we laid out a town calling it

Linnton for Doctor Linn. It was a fair site, except for one small reason: it was not at the head of ship navigation, which subsequent experience prove to be at Portland, some miles above. I had a cabin built at Linnton and lived there with my family from about the middle of January until the first of May, 1844. We performed a considerable amount of labor there, most of which was expended in opening a wagon road thence to the Tualatin Plains, over a mountain and through a dense forest of fir, ceñar, maple, and other timber. When finished the road was barely passable with wagons. Our town speculation was a small loss to us, the receipts from the sale of lots not being equal to the expenses.

I found that expenses were certain and income nothing, and determined to select what was then called "a claim," and make me a farm. I knew very little about farming, though raised upon a farm in Missouri, and had not performed any manual labor of consequence (until I began to prepare for this trip) for about seventeen years. I had some recollection of farming, but the theory as practiced in Missouri would not fully do for Oregon. Mr. Douglas told me that I could not succeed at farming, as there was a great deal of hard work on a farm. I replied that, in my opinion, a sensible and determined man could succeed at almost anything, and I meant to do it. I did succeed well, but I never had my intellect more severely tasked, with a few exceptions. Those who think good farming not an intellectual business are most grievously mistaken.

PURCHASE A CLAIM—CLIMATE AND SCENERY OF OREGON—NUMBER OF OUR IMMIGRANTS—ASSISTANCE RENDERED OUR IMMIGRATION.

Some time in April, 1844, I went to the Tualatin Plains and purchased a claim in the middle of a circular plain about three miles in diameter. The claim was entirely destitute of timber, except a few ash trees which grew along the margin of the swales. The plain was beautiful and was divided from the plains adjoining by living streams of water flowing from the mountains, the banks of which streams were skirted with fir and white cedar timber. The surface of this plain was gently undulating, barely sufficient for drainage. I purchased ten acres of splendid fir timber distant about a mile and a half, for twenty five dollars. This supply proved ample for a farm of about two hundred and fifty acres.

These swales are peculiar winter drains, from ten to thirty yards wide, and from one to two feet deep. In the winter they were filled with slowly running water, but in summer they are dry, and their flat bottoms become almost as hard as brick. No vegetation of consequence will grow in these swales, and the only timber along their margins is scattering ash, from six to eight inches in diameter,

and from twenty to twenty-five feet high, with wide, bushy tops. The land on both sides of these swales being clean prairie, the rows of green ash in summer give the plain a beautiful appearance.

During the five years I remained in Oregon the rainy season invariably set in between the 18th of October and the 1st of November, and continued until about the middle of April, with occasional showers to July. In 1845 there were showers in August sufficient to sprout wheat in the shock. Always about the 10th of September we had frost sufficient to kill bean and melon vines. The season for sowing wheat and oats extended from the commencement of the rains until the first of May, and the harvest began about the 20th of July. We had snow every winter but one while I was in Oregon. At one time it was from six to eight inches deep, and remained upon the ground about ten days. The Columbia River was then frozen over at Vancouver; but this fact is not a true indication of the degree of cold, as this stream heads in a cold region, and the ice forms above and comes down in floating masses, and, when the tide is rising, there is little or no current in the river and it then freezes over very easily. During the winter, and most generally in February, there is an interval of fine weather which lasts about twenty days, with a cold wind from the north, and hard frosts.

But, during most of the rainy season, the rains are almost continuous. Sometimes the sun would not be seen for twenty days in succession. It would generally rain about three days and nights without intermission, then cease for about the same period (still remaining cloudy), and then begin again. These rains were not very heavy, but cold and steady, accompanied with a brisk, driving wind from the south. It required a very stout, determined man to ride all day facing one of these rains. They were far worse than driving snow, as they wet and chilled the rider through. The summers, the latter half of the spring, and the early half of the fall, were the finest in the world, so far as my own experience extends. Though the rainy seasons be long and tedious, they are, upon the whole, a blessing. The copious rains fertilize the soil of the fields and keep them always fresh and productive. In my own best judgment, Oregon is one of the loveliest and most fertile spots of earth. It is destined to be densely populated and finely cultivated. The scenery of her mountains and valleys is simply magnificent. Her snow-clad mountains, her giant forests, her clear skies in summer, and her green and blooming valleys, constitute a combination of the beautiful that cannot be excelled.

When we arrived in Oregon we more than doubled the resident population of the country. J. W. Nesmith, our orderly sergeant, made a complete roll of the male members of the company capable of bearing arms, including all above the age of sixteen years. This

roll he preserved and produced at the Oregon Pioneers' Celebration in June, 1875. I have inspected this roll as published in the "Oregonian," and find it correct, except in the omission of the name of B. B. Redding, who went to California, and included the name of A. L. Lovejoy, who came the year before.

The roll contained 293 names, 267 of whom arrived in Oregon. Of the 26 missing, six died on the way, five turned back on Platte River, and fifteen went to California. He also gives the names of many of the resident male population, and estimates their number at 157. John M. Shively* made a complete list of all the emigrants at the crossing of Kansas River, but that list has unfortunately been lost. Judge M. P. Deady, in his address before the Oregon Pioneers in June, 1875, estimated the immigration of 1843, men, women, and children, at nine hundred. My estimate would not be so high. I have always estimated the number arriving in Oregon as not exceeding eight hundred.

When we arrived in Oregon we were poor, and our teams were so much reduced as to be unfit for service until the next spring. Those of us who came by water from Walla Walla left our cattle there for the winter; and those who came by water from the Dalles left their cattle for the winter at that point. Even if our teams had been fit for use when we arrived, they would have been of no benefit to us, as we could not bring them to the Willamette Valley until the spring of 1844. Pork was ten and flour four cents a pound, and other provisions in proportion. These were high prices considering our scanty means and extra appetites. Had it not been for the generous kindness of the gentlemen in charge of the business of the Hudson's Bay Company, we should have suffered much greater privations. The company furnished many of our immigrants with provisions, clothing, seed, and other necessities on credit. This was done, in many instances, where the purchasers were known to be of doubtful credit. At that time the company had most of the provisions and merchandise in the country, and the trade with our people was, upon the whole, a decided loss, so many failing to pay for what they purchased. Many of our immigrants were unworthy of the favors they received, and only returned abuse for generosity.

I remember an example, related to me by Captain James Waters, an excellent man, possessed of a kind heart, a truthful tongue, and a very patient disposition. As before stated, some of our immigrants passed from the Dalles to the Cascades on rafts made of

*John M. Shively is an engineer, and a plain, unassuming man, who was possessed of much greater genuine ability than most people supposed. Justice has never been done him. He was in Washington City in the winter of 1845-'46, and was the originator of the project of a steamship line from New York to this coast by way of Panama.

dry logs. This was not only slow navigation, but their rafts were utterly useless after reaching the Cascades; and they were compelled to remain there for some days before they could descend the river to the fort. In the meantime their supplies of provisions had been consumed. Captain Waters was among the first of our immigrants to arrive at Vancouver, having no family with him, and he at once applied to Doctor McLoughlin for supplies of provisions for the immigrants at the Cascades, but had nothing wherewith to pay. The doctor furnished the supplies and also a boat to take them up, with the understanding that Captain Waters would navigate the vessel and sell the provisions to the immigrants at Vancouver prices. This was done, but many of the purchasers never paid, contenting themselves with abusing the doctor and the captain, accusing them of wishing to speculate upon the necessities of poor immigrants. The final result was a considerable loss, which Doctor McLoughlin and Captain Waters divided equally between them. I met Waters myself with the boat laden with provisions going up, as I passed down the river the first time, and there can be no doubt of the truth of his statement.

DR. JOHN M'LOUGHLIN—JAMES DOUGLAS—POLICY OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY IN ITS COURSE WITH THE INDIANS.

Dr. John McLoughlin was one of the greatest and most noble philanthropists I ever knew. He was a man of superior ability, just in all his dealings, and a faithful Christian. I never knew a man of the world who was more admirable. I never heard him utter a vicious sentiment, or applaud a wrongful act. His views and acts were formed upon the model of the Christian gentleman. He was a superior business man, and a profound judge of human nature. He had read a great deal, and had learned much from intercourse with intelligent men. He spoke and wrote French and English equally well, having learned both languages while growing up from childhood.

In his position of chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company he had grievous responsibilities imposed upon him. He stood between the absent directors and stockholders of the company and the present suffering immigrants. He witnessed their sufferings; they did not. He was unjustly blamed by many of both parties. It was not the business of the company to deal upon credit, and the manager of its affairs in Oregon was suddenly thrown into a new and very embarrassing position. How to act so as to secure the approbation of the directors and stockholders in England, and at the same time not to disregard the most urgent calls of humanity, was indeed the great difficulty. No possible line of conduct could have escaped censure.

To be placed in that position was a misfortune which only a good man could bear with patience. I was assured by Mr. Frank Ermatinger, the manager of the company's store at Oregon City, as well as by others, that Doctor McLoughlin had sustained a heavy individual loss by his charity to the immigrants. I knew enough myself to be certain that these statements were substantially true. Yet such was the humility of the doctor that he never, to my knowledge, mentioned or alluded to any particular act of charity performed by him. I was intimate with him, and he never mentioned them to me. When I first saw him in 1843, his hair was white. He had then been in Oregon about twenty years. He was a large, noble-looking old man, of commanding figure and countenance. His manners were courteous but frank, and the stranger at once felt at ease in his presence.

Mr. James Douglas, (subsequently Sir James, and Governor of British Columbia), was a younger man than Doctor McLoughlin by some fifteen years. He was a man of very superior intelligence, and a finished Christian gentleman. His course toward us was noble, prudent, and generous. I do not think that at that time he possessed the knowledge of men that the doctor did, nor was he so great a philanthropist. I regarded him as a just and able man, with a conscience and character above reproach. In his position of Governor of British Columbia, he was censured by Mr. John Nugent, of California, as I must think, without sufficient reason. Errors of judgment Governor Douglas may have committed, as almost any man would have done at times in his trying position, but he must have radically changed since I knew him, if he knowingly acted improperly.

It was most fortunate for us that two such noble men were managers of the company at the time of our arrival. Our own countrymen had it not in their power to aid us efficiently. Many of them were immigrants of the preceding season; others were connected with the missions; and, altogether, they were too few and poor to help us much. The company could not afford to extend to succeeding immigrations the same credit they did to us. The burden would have been to great. This refusal led many to complain, but without sufficient reason.

From Doctor McLoughlin and others I learned a great deal in reference to the manner in which the business of the company had been conducted. At the time of the doctor's arrival in Oregon, and for many years afterward, the principal inhabitants were Indians, divided into various small tribes, speaking different languages. These Indians were mainly found upon the Columbia and its tributaries, and far outnumbered the hired servants of the company. The task of controlling these wild people was one of great delicacy, requiring

a thorough knowledge of human nature and the greatest administrative ability. The doctor's policy was based upon the fundamental idea that all men, civilized or savage, have an innate love of justice, and will therefore be ultimately best satisfied with fair, honest dealing.

The company had its various trading posts located at convenient points throughout a vast territory. The Indian population being about stationary as to numbers and pursuits, it was not very difficult to calculate the amount of supplies likely to be required in *each* year. The company was in the habit of importing one *year's* supply in advance, so that if a cargo should be lost, its customers would not suffer. Its goods were all of a superior quality, purchased on the best terms, and we were sold at prices both uniform and moderate. Of course, prices in the interior were higher than on the seaboard, but they never varied at the same post. The Indians knew nothing of the intricate law of supply and demand, and could not be made to understand why an article of a given size and quality should be worth more at one time than at another in the same place, while the material and labor used and employed in its manufacture were the same. A tariff of prices, once adopted, was never changed. The goods were not only of the best, but of uniform quality. To secure these results the company had most of its goods manufactured to order. The wants of the Indians being very few, their purchases were confined to a small variety of articles, and consequently they became the very best judges of the quality of the goods they desired to purchase. No one could detect any imperfection in a blanket more readily and conclusively than an Oregon Indian. There was always kept an ample supply at each post, so that the customers of the company were not driven at any time to deal with rival traders, or do without their usual supplies.

It was evident that no successful competition with the company could last long under such circumstances. No one could continue to undersell them and make profit, and the competitor without a profit must fail. The uniform low prices and the good quality of its articles pleased the Indians, and the company secured their custom beyond the reach of competition. The company adopted a system that would work out best in the end, and, of course, was successful.

In the course of time the company induced the Indians to throw aside the bow and arrow and to use the gun; and, as the company had all the guns and ammunition in the country, the Indians became dependent upon it for their supplies of these articles. It was the great object of the company to preserve the peace among the Indians within the limits of its trading territory, not only from motives of pure humanity, but from mercantile interest, as the destruction of

the Indians was the destruction of its customers, and the consequent ruin of its trade.

When the Indians went to war with each other, the doctor first interposed his mediation, as the common friend and equal of both parties. When all other means failed, he refused to sell them arms and ammunition, saying that it was the business of the company to sell them these articles to kill game with, not to kill each other. By kindness, justice, and discreet firmness, the Indians were generally kept at peace among themselves. They found it almost impossible to carry on war.

But the task of protecting the servants of the company against the attacks of the Indians was one of still greater difficulty. The doctor impressed the Indians with the fact that the company was simply a mercantile corporation, whose purpose was only trade with the natives; that its intention was only to appropriate to its exclusive use a few sites for its trading posts and small parcels of adjacent lands, sufficient to produce supplies for its people, thus leaving all the remainder of the country for the use and in the exclusive possession of the Indians; and that this possession of limited amounts of land by the company would be mutually beneficial. Even savages have the native good sense to discover the mutual benefits of trade. The Indians wanted a market for their furs, and the company customers for its merchandise.

It was an inflexible rule with the doctor never to violate his word, whether it was a promise of reward or a threat of punishment. There is no vice more detested by Indians than a failure to keep one's word, which they call lying. If it were a failure to perform a promised act beneficial to the Indians themselves, they would regard it as a fraud akin to theft; and, if a failure to carry out a threat of punishment, they would consider it the result of weakness or cowardice. In either case, the party who broke his pledged word would forfeit their respect, and in the first case would incur their undying resentment.

To guard against the natural jealousy of the Indians, and insure peace between them and the servants of the company, it became necessary to adopt and enforce the most rigid discipline among the latter. This discipline was founded upon the great principle that, to avoid difficulty with others, we must first do right ourselves. To make this discipline the more efficient, the doctor adopted such measures as substantially to exclude all intoxicating liquors from the country. When a crime was committed by an Indian, the doctor made it a rule not to hold the whole tribe responsible for the unauthorized acts of individuals, but to inflict punishment upon the culprit himself. In cases of crime by Indians, the doctor insisted upon just punishment; and, if the culprit escaped for a time, the

pursuit was never given up until he was captured. In some cases, several years elapsed between the date of the crime and that of the capture of the fugitive. Certain and just punishment was always inflicted upon the criminal. This the doctor was able to accomplish through the company's agents at the different posts, and by negotiation with the leading Indian chiefs, and the offer of rewards for the arrest of the fugitive.

In this manner the doctor secured and kept the confidence of the Indians. When he first arrived in Oregon, and for some time thereafter, whenever boats were sent up the Columbia with supplies, a guard of sixty armed men was required; but, in due time, only the men necessary to propel the boats were needed. The Indians at the different portages were employed and paid by the company to assist in making them.

The Indians soon saw that the company was a mere trading establishment, confined to a small space of land at each post, and was, in point of fact, advantageous to themselves. The few Canadian-French who were located in the Willamette Valley were mostly, if not entirely, connected by marriage with the Indians, the Frenchmen having Indian wives, and were considered to some extent as a part of their own people. But when we, the American immigrants, came into what the Indians claimed as their own country, we were considerable in numbers; and we came, not to establish trade with the Indians, but to take and settle the country exclusively for ourselves. Consequently, we went anywhere we pleased, settled down without any treaty or consultation with the Indians, and occupied our claims without their consent and without compensation. This difference they very soon understood. Every succeeding fall they found the white population about doubled, and our settlements continually extending, and rapidly encroaching more and more upon their pasture and camas grounds. They saw that we fenced in the best lands, excluding their horses from the grass, and our hogs ate up their camas. They instinctively saw annihilation before them.

As illustrative of the difficulties of Doctor McLoughlin's position, I will state the facts of a few cases, as they were related to me substantially by the doctor himself.

The shore of the Columbia River in front of Fort Vancouver was covered with cobble-stones, which were used by the company as ballast for its returning ships. The principal chief of the Indians concluded that the company ought to pay something for these stones; and one day, in the presence of a large crowd of his people (assembled, perhaps, for that purpose), he demanded payment of the doctor. Of course, the doctor was taken by surprise, but at once comprehended the situation. He knew, if he consented to pay in this case, there would be no end to exactions in the future. How

best to avoid the payment without giving offense was the question. He knew that the Indians possessed a keen sense of the ridiculous; and, after reflecting a moment, he picked up a cobble-stone and solemnly offered it to the chief, saying: "Eat this." The Indians present at once saw how ridiculous it was to demand payment for that which was of no practical value to them, and set up a loud shout of derisive laughter. The chief was so much ashamed of his silly demand that he walked off in silence, and never after that demanded payment for things of no value to him.

While the company's ships lay at anchor in the river opposite the fort, the doctor occasionally granted a permit, written, to some particular Indian to visit the ships. On one occasion he granted such a permit to an Indian who was seen by other Indians to go on board, but was not seen by them to return, though, in fact, he did so return. Within a day or two thereafter, the brother of this Indian, being unable to find him, and suspecting that he had been enticed on board the ship, and either murdered or forcibly imprisoned for the purpose of abduction, applied to the doctor for a permit to visit the ship. As the Indian concealed his reason for asking the permit, the doctor supposed he was influenced by an idle curiosity, and refused the request. The Indian returned again for the same purpose, and was again refused. He came the third time, with the same result. He then concluded that his brother must either be imprisoned on the ship or had been murdered, and he at once resolved upon revenge. In the evening of the same day, about an hour before sunset, a shot was heard, and the gardener came running into the fort in great terror, with a bullet hole through the top of his hat, saying that an Indian had fired upon him from behind the garden fence. The gates of the fort were at once closed, and all hands prepared for defense. Upon subsequent investigation, the body of the missing Indian was found in the bushes, in the rear of the fort. He had evidently fallen down in a fit, and expired where his body was found. No attempt was made to punish the surviving brother, as he had acted under a very natural mistake.

On one occasion the Indians determined to take and sack Fort Vancouver. The plot for this purpose was conceived, and in part executed, with consummate ability.

Two of their most powerful chiefs quietly went from Fort Vancouver to Nesqually, a trading post on Puget Sound, and remained there several days. While there, they made themselves minutely acquainted with everything about the fort. They then speedily returned to Fort Vancouver, and at once sought and obtained an interview with Doctor McLoughlin and his associates. One of the Indians was the speaker, while the other carefully watched to see what im-

pression their statements would make. The company's interpreter, a very shrewd Canadian, was present during the interview.

The Indians stated that they left Nesqually at a certain time, which was true; and that the Indians in that vicinity had attacked and captured the fort by surprise, and had slaughtered all the inhabitants, amounting to a certain number of persons, which number they specified truly. The Indians were subjected to a severe cross-examination without betraying the slightest embarrassment, and without making any contradictory statements. When asked how many persons were in the fort at the time, what were their several ages, sexes, appearances, employments, and the position that each occupied in the fort, they invariably gave the correct answer. It was impossible to detect any contradictions in their statements. All were perfectly consistent, as the only falsehood was the alleged fact that Fort Nesqually had been taken and the people killed. The doctor and his associates were greatly perplexed, and left in much doubt. The Canadian interpreter was asked his opinion, and he replied: "Let me sleep on it one night." Next morning he said he did not believe the story; that the Indians were such liars that he could not believe them; that they had before deceived them. This view prevailed.

The object of these Indians was to induce the company to send nearly all its men to Nesqually to punish the alleged murderers, thus reducing the force at Fort Vancouver to such an extent that it could be readily taken. These Indians knew, from the invariable practice of the company, that such a crime, if committed, would not escape punishment if practicable. If they could only make the doctor believe their narrative, he would at once dispatch an ample force to Nesqually.

The traders in charge of interior trading posts were often exposed to peril from Indians. The company could only keep a few men at each post, and the Indians at times would become discontented. A rude people, depending entirely upon the spontaneous productions of Nature for a supply of provisions, must often suffer extreme want. In such a case men become desperate, and are easily excited to rash acts. Mr. McKinley told me that the Indians on one occasion attempted to rob Fort Walla Walla, and were only prevented by the most cool, intrepid courage of the people of the post.